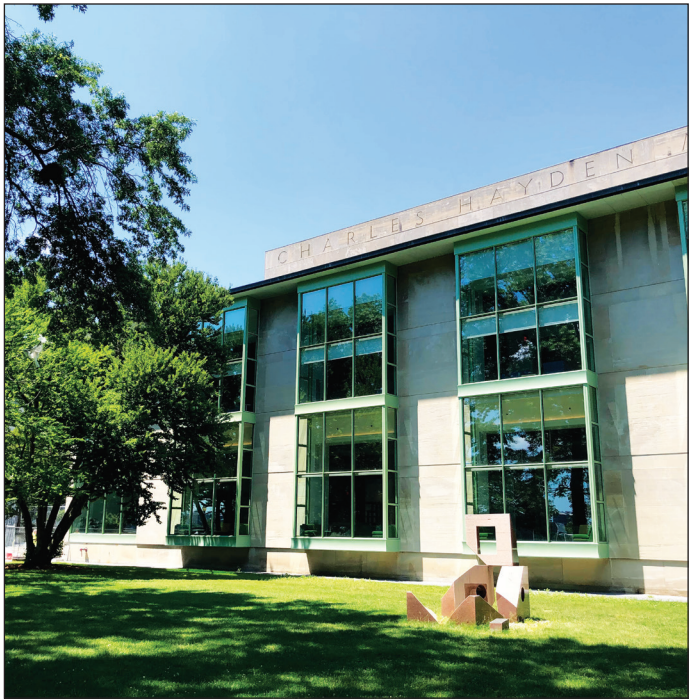




KEVIN LY—THE TECH

Construction on Hayden Library's interior was completed earlier this year. It now eagerly awaits re-welcoming the MIT community once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

Melissa Nobles, SHASS dean, appointed to chancellor post

Philosophy professor Agustin Rayo to act as interim SHASS dean starting August 18, provost announces

By Srinidhi Narayanan
NEWS EDITOR

Melissa Nobles, Dean of the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (SHASS) and a professor of political science, will serve as MIT's next chancellor, effective August 18, President L. Rafael Reif announced in an email to the MIT community on June 17. She will replace Cynthia Barnhart SM '86, PhD '88, who officially steps down from the chancellor role July 1.

As chancellor, Nobles assumes one of the "Institute's two most senior academic" positions — the chancellor (along with the provost) "reports to the president of MIT." In this role, Nobles will oversee "stu-

dent life and learning, in a broad role that encompasses undergraduate and graduate education and student well-being, as well as strategic planning and fundraising" for all student-related matters.

Nobles underscored the importance of her role, stating that it is "an honor to serve as chancellor and to continue building on MIT's work to create a healthy and respectful learning environment — one that nurtures intellectual curiosity and emotional maturation," according to MIT News.

Nobles is a "pioneering scholar on questions of racial and ethnic politics and retrospective justice in society," and previously served as associate chair of the faculty and as

department head in the political science department, Reif wrote. He further stated that she is "an invaluable member of MIT's academic leadership," emphasizing her "exceptional judgement and sense of fairness paired with her incisive intellect, humane wisdom, careful listening, unflinching eloquence, and charismatic wit."

As a political science faculty member, Nobles has taught both undergraduate and graduate courses, including those on "comparative ethnic politics and conflict" and "democratization"; among her projects while serving as SHASS dean, Nobles led efforts to ensure that

Chancellor, Page 2

MIT, Harvard to sell edX for \$800 million to EdTech company 2U

Proceeds of transaction will launch nonprofit organization focused on researching online learning, improving accessibility

By Kristina Chen
EDITOR IN CHIEF

edX, the online learning nonprofit launched by MIT and Harvard in 2012, will be acquired for \$800 million by 2U, Inc. a publicly traded education technology company. The \$800 million proceeds will be used by MIT and Harvard to create a new nonprofit organization with a goal of "reimagining the future of learning for people at all stages of life, addressing educational inequalities, and continuing to advance next generation learning experiences

and platforms," according to an edX press release.

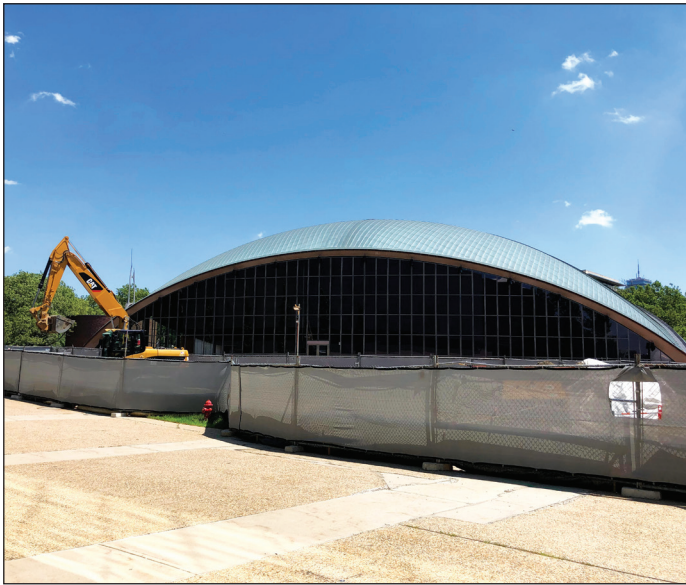
Through the transaction, edX's assets will be transferred to a public benefit company owned by 2U while still maintaining its name, course offerings, partner arrangements, and users. edX will continue to offer its existing free courses and certificates at a fee under 2U. 2U will also retain all current edX employees who do not join the new nonprofit organization.

"This is the early innings in the digital transformation of higher education today," 2U Co-Founder

and CEO Christopher "Chip" Paucek said at a media briefing on the deal. "The next decade will bring a massive shift online; the pandemic has not only accelerated the adoption of online learning, but also set higher education institutions firmly on a path towards a more digital."

edX CEO and MIT Professor Anant Agarwal said during the briefing that as the number of edX users grew during the pandemic to over 39 million learners, MIT recognized that "now was the moment to find

edX, Page 2



KEVIN LY—THE TECH

Construction projects continue around Kresge Auditorium's northwestern side Wednesday.

IN SHORT

July 2 is a special Institute holiday.

Independence Day is July 4 and will be observed as an Institute holiday July 5.

July 5 is the last day for undergraduates to enroll in a meal plan for Fall 2021.

July 15 is the last day to petition for an August or September Advanced Standing Exam.

Faculty, students, and staff should report their **vaccine status** at covidvaccine.mit.edu.

Interested in **joining The Tech**? Email join@tech.mit.edu.

Send news and tips to news@tech.mit.edu.

MIT lifts many COVID-19 restrictions, removing capacity limits and lowering testing frequency

Additional policy changes expected to come in July following higher vaccination rates

By Shelley Choi
NEWS EDITOR

MIT lifted several COVID-19 related restrictions, following the decisions of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the City of Cambridge to end most restrictions, in an email to the MIT community on June 7. The email noted that relaxations were also made possible due to "high vaccination rates reported" by those accessing campus.

Most notably, MIT eliminated capacity limits and "policies on social distancing" for "both indoor and outdoor spaces" and relaxed testing protocol for indi-

viduals "living on campus or accessing campus buildings at least weekly." They are only required to test for COVID-19 once a week, a reduction from twice a week. Access is now no longer "limited to an assigned subset of buildings."

"Events sponsored by MIT departments, labs, centers, offices, and student organizations are now permitted" if all attendees are registered for contact-tracing purposes. All attendees must also wear "well-fitted face coverings" if events are held indoors.

Indoor dining is encouraged to be limited to "four people" while maintaining "6 feet of distance between individuals."

Visitors may "now enter non-residential campus buildings" if "escorted" by an authorized Covid Pass user. "All visitors must follow MIT's pre-Covid visitor policies, as well as posted Covid safety precautions." Unescorted visitors are only "allowed in outdoor spaces on campus."

Several previously existing policies are still in place. Face coverings "remain required indoors" unless an individual is "eating, drinking, or alone in a fully enclosed spaces." In residential buildings, "face coverings need not be worn when with podmates, or in gatherings of fully vaccinated groups." Retail dining on campus

"remains paused," though most seating is available for eating.

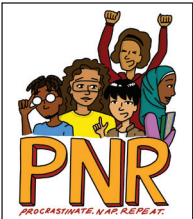
If "public health conditions deteriorate in the coming weeks, either on campus or in the surrounding communities," policies are subject to change.

Additional policy changes are expected in July once "more members" have the "chance to get vaccinated" and MIT can better evaluate "how the lifting of state and city restrictions impacts Covid's prevalence on campus and locally."

MIT had announced enforcing a COVID-19 vaccine requirement for all students enrolled in Fall 2021 on April 30.

VIRTUAL COMMENCEMENT

Bryan Stevenson addresses the Class of 2021 during an online commencement ceremony June 4. **NEWS, p. 3**



PNR

sudo pip install. **FUN, p. 4**

AD HOC COMMITTEE

Committee charged with developing strategic plan for graduate student advising and mentorship. **NEWS, p. 2**

SECTIONS

Fun Pages 4

WEATHER

Showers clearing up in time for Independence Day

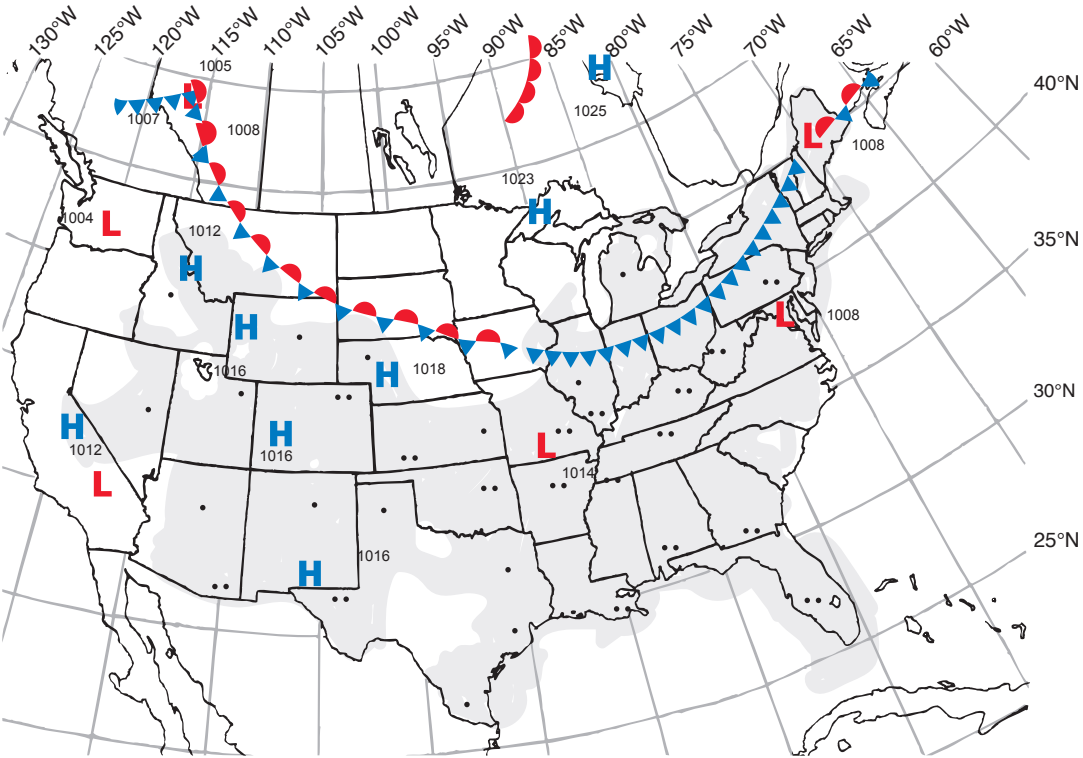
By Phoebe Lin
STAFF METEOROLOGIST

As storms and heavy rain persist through the southern and eastern U.S., several states such as Michigan, Central Texas, and Illinois are experiencing much-needed drought relief. At the same time, the risk of flash flooding threatens much of the eastern U.S. In the Pacific Northwest, record-breaking high temperatures continue to scorch Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and parts of Canada, worsened by the

long-term drought. Water conservation efforts are in effect, limiting the times when we can water our lawns and take showers. Whether you are trying to celebrate Independence Day in the middle of a heat wave or through the tail of a wave of storms, we hope you'll try to keep yourself and your loved ones safe! Don't leave fires unsupervised, and consider some weather-safe alternatives to barbecues and fireworks. Make sure to enjoy the mostly sunny weather outside over the long weekend!

Extended Forecast

Today: Showers likely and chance of thunderstorms. High around 83°F (28°C). West winds 5–7 mph, lessening in the afternoon.
Tonight: Showers likely and patchy fog with possibility of thunderstorms. Low around 65°F (18°C). South winds around 5 mph; new rainfall amounts between 1/2–3/4 inch possible.
Tomorrow: Showers likely and patchy fog. High around 68°F (20°C) and low around 60°F (16°C). Winds northeast at 7–10 mph with gusts as high as 20 mph.
Saturday: Chance showers with a high of 66°F (19°C) and low around 59°F (15°C). Mostly cloudy; winds in the northeast around 6–10 mph.
Sunday: Chance showers, and otherwise mostly sunny. High near 72°F (22°C) and low near 61°F (16°C). North wind around 6 mph transitioning to southeast in the evening.



Situation for Noon Eastern Time, Thursday, July 1, 2021

Weather Systems	Weather Fronts	Precipitation Symbols	Other Symbols
H High Pressure	--- Trough	Snow * Rain *	Fog
L Low Pressure	Warm Front	Showers * Light *	Thunderstorm
§ Hurricane	Cold Front	Moderate ** Heavy ***	Haze
	Stationary Front		

Compiled by MIT Meteorology Staff and The Tech

Nobles recognized for multidisciplinary initiatives across departments

Chancellor, from Page 1

campus education be “expansive, multidisciplinary, and socially relevant,” MIT News wrote. In particular, she “developed connections between existing academic fields and the Schwarzman College of Computing”; encouraged new research courses, such

as those exploring MIT’s history and “ties to slavery”; and worked to encourage new infrastructure for SHASS departments, notably including “the new music building on campus.” In an interview with MIT News, Reif said he spoke to “colleagues and students to get a sense of the qualities our community feels are

most important in our next chancellor, and inviting suggestions for candidates who embody those qualities,” regarding the chancellor selection process. Reif also reportedly reviewed feedback in response to Barnhart’s decision to step down. While no official committee was appointed to search for a new chancellor, Reif asked “a few col-

leagues to join” him in interviewing finalists. Following the announcement of Nobles’s appointment, Provost Martin Schmidt PhD ’88 shared that Agustin Rayo PhD ’01, professor of philosophy, would serve as the interim SHASS dean, effective August 18, via email. Schmidt also shared in an MIT News article linked in his

email that he had appointed a committee, chaired by Professor Caspar Hare, to select the next SHASS dean. The committee will reportedly “widely engage the MIT community” and will solicit feedback from various stakeholders “across SHASS and beyond” and provide Schmidt with recommendations later in the fall.

New nonprofit may conduct research on AI, ML, AR, VR tools for learning

edX, from Page 1

the right like-minded and mission-aligned partner” for edX and began a search last fall, resulting in the deal with 2U. Acquiring edX will allow 2U to work with over 225 partners and offer more than 3,500 digital programs, an increase from 2U’s current services (around 75 partners and 500 online learning offerings). Provisions lasting five years negotiated between edX and 2U for the transaction include that 2U will guarantee affordability of edX courses, protect intellectual property rights of partners contributing

to the courses, ensure that participating universities can continue under their standing agreements with edX, and protect the privacy of learner data on the edX platform. Additional provisions include that 2U will expand degree programs of edX, work to improve Open edX source code, increase accessibility to non-English speaking markets and learners with disabilities, and continue to offer and maintain the quality of courses offered on edX. The transaction is expected to close in the fall, following regulatory and governmental approval. The nonprofit organization arising from the transaction will con-

tinue to enhance the Open edX platform with a new mission of researching challenges in online learning. President L. Rafael Reif wrote in a June 29 email to the MIT community that the nonprofit could possibly “invest in the potential of AI and other tools to make online learning more responsive and personalized to the individual learner.” Additionally, MIT expects that the nonprofit will collaborate with organizations with a direct understanding of the learning needs of various communities. In an interview with The Tech, Provost Martin Schmidt PhD ’88

said that through 2U’s and the nonprofit’s commitment to improving the Open edX source code, MIT’s ability to deliver learning experience through online platforms will be strengthened. Additionally, the nonprofit hopes to use resources from the transaction “to make further investments in building learning platforms that can make more personalized learning experiences” through the use of augmented reality, virtual reality, or machine learning. Schmidt added that an additional focus of the nonprofit is to reach learners who are part of communities that “aren’t being well-served by

online learning resources that are available today.” The nonprofit organization intends to democratize access to online learning through partnerships with organizations and other forms of engagement. MIT’s own massive open online courses (MOOCs), or MITx, will remain in place. Faculty with MITx classes can choose to continue offering them on edX, move them to a new platform called MITx Online, consider options such as MIT’s OpenCourseWare or Open Learning Library, or remove the classes. The new MITx Online platform will be built based on Open edX but host only MIT MOOCs.

New Ad Hoc Committee on Graduate Advising and Mentoring launched

MIT launched a new Ad Hoc Committee on Graduate Advising and Mentoring, Chancellor Cynthia Barnhart PhD ’88, Chair of the Faculty Rick Danheiser, and Provost Martin Schmidt PhD ’88 announced in a June 25 email to the MIT community. The committee is co-chaired by Head of the Department of Chemical Engineering Professor Paula Hammond PhD ’93 and Associate Provost Tim Jamison. Its membership also includes 10 graduate students and 11 faculty and staff, with representatives from the Graduate Student Council (GSC) and each school at the Institute. The committee was created in line with a proposal from Task Force 2021 and Beyond. Its main goal is to deliver a “strategic plan to guide policies and programs that would be implemented at MIT,” Barnhart, Danheiser, and Schmidt wrote. The plan will incorporate recommendations from a National Acad-

emies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) report on effective mentorship. The recommendations include evidence-based educational programs for mentorship skill development, mechanisms for graduate student feedback, metrics for mentoring assessment, best practices of mentorship, programs supporting multiple mentorship models, and incentives for excellence in mentorship. Barnhart, Danheiser, and Schmidt added that the committee will contribute to ongoing initiatives from the provost’s and chancellor’s offices, MIT’s schools, and the GSC. These initiatives include MIT’s response to the NASEM reports on mentorship and on the sexual harassment of women in academia, guaranteed transitional support for graduate students who switch advisors, a pilot mentorship training program for School of Engineering Faculty, and the GSC’s research advising survey. — Kristina Chen

When you join Production at The Tech and get paid to advertise The Tech in The Tech

Lawyer and activist Bryan Stevenson addresses graduates at virtual commencement ceremony

Stevenson urged graduates to ‘do uncomfortable and inconvenient things’ to ‘change some of the narratives that are sustaining inequality and injustice across the globe’

By Nicole Chan
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR

The Class of 2021 Commencement took place June 4 through a two-hour live webcast streamed on the commencement website.

Bryan Stevenson, an American lawyer, social justice activist, and founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, currently a law professor at New York University School of Law, addressed the Class of 2021 as their commencement speaker.

In his speech, Stevenson spoke about the “justice deficit” in our country. He said that we are living “in a time when there are many, many problems that threaten the health and safety and hope of communities across the planet.”

Stevenson challenged graduates to “recognize that the hard work is not over.” He also urged graduates to “find new ways to get proximate to those who suffer” and “apply the same tactics, the same strategies, the same commitment to a better way to the problems of inequality and injustice as we apply to the problems of science and technology.”

Stevenson reminded students that he “would not be here without that commitment to proximity” a generation ago if “lawyers didn’t come into my community and open up doors.” He also urged graduates to “change some of the narratives that are sustaining inequality and injustice across the globe.”

“I believe that if we allow ourselves to be governed by fear and anger, we’ll tolerate things we should never tolerate,” Stevenson said. “We’ll accept things we should

never accept.” Stevenson explained that MIT graduates should “change the narrative.”

“A third thing I need you to recognize is that you need to stay hopeful,” Stevenson said. He pointed out that “hopelessness is the enemy of justice.”

In closing, Stevenson reminded the graduates that in order to “make the world a better place,” they have to be “willing to do uncomfortable and inconvenient things” even though “humans are biologically and psychologically programmed to do what’s comfortable.” Stevenson commended the Class of 2021 and said he will be “cheering for you as you do the important work that lies in front of all of us.”

President L. Rafael Reif, who spoke next, began his speech by remembering the late Institute Professor Millie Dresselhaus, a National Medal of Science and Presidential Medal of Freedom winner recognized for her pioneering work in science and engineering. “The Improbability Walk,” the space on the other side of the Great Dome, is named in her honor, as she has often called her journey “improbable.”

As the months before the Class of 2021’s graduation is “transformed by the intense struggles and losses of a global pandemic,” Reif explained that this means the class is “stepping out into the world with an ‘improbable journey’ already under your belt.”

Reif also commended the graduates that “through immense effort, self-discipline, creativity and com-

passion,” have “found a way to rise to the demands of this historic challenge together.”

He was confident that the Class of 2021 has also “found an ingenious way to transform an unfamiliar atmosphere into rocket fuel for future expeditions.”

Reif also asked graduates, as he has at previous commencements, to “hack the world, until you make the world a little more like MIT” and to “try to heal the world” as well.

Reif said that an in-person commencement will be held at MIT at “some safe point in the future.” He also said that digital diplomas have been delivered to students who requested them through the Blockcerts vWallet app.

Madeleine Sutherland G, president of the Graduate Student Council, spoke after Reif, and reflected on the past year of “living through myriad forms of disaster” and commended students for adapting to virtual learning, researching “the present monster of COVID-19” and “21st century’s other big challenges,” and solidarity.

Sutherland reminded students that when “nothing feels real anymore, remember to keep calling on each other and your friends within MIT.”

President of the Class of 2021, Kofi Blake ’21, spoke next, bringing the focus back to the past. “The greatest problems of our generation: climate change, wealth inequality, global poverty must be solved using the technology of the future with the resolve of the past,” Blake said.

Blake also addressed the Class of 2021: “the choice is up to you to be

leaders and builders, to be visionaries and problem solvers.” Blake led the turning of the ring, which was accompanied with a digital video version of the turning of the Brass Rat.

Daniel Lowenstein G, PhD student in the MIT-Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution Joint Program, spoke about his journey post-college, revealing that “for almost three years, I worked as an oyster farmer, a baker, a line cook, and a sous chef ... after 20 applications, I got a phone call and the chance I had waited for.” He told students to keep in mind that “an MIT education allows for you to do incredible things and to go to places you never dreamed possible.”

MIT Alumni Association President Charlene Kabcenell ’79 spoke last, offering a salute to the Class of 2021: “the entire alumni body, now over 143,000 strong, joins me in congratulating all of the 2021 graduates and officially welcoming you into our alumni family, your infinite connection to MIT.”

The commencement ceremony ended with a performance of the school song “Arise All Ye of MIT” and a sing-along of “Take Me Back to the Tech,” both led by the Choralaries of MIT.

During the hour preceding and the hour after Commencement, Dylan Sleeper ’21 and Annie Yun ’21 hosted a pre-program and post-program show, featuring videos submitted by students, faculty, alumni, and other members of the MIT community congratulating and commemorating the graduating class.

Solution to Superstition

from page 4

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Solution to Tour

from page 4

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2	6	4	5	1	3

Solution to Wimbledon

from page 4

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8	9	4	1	7	2	5	3	6
3	7	5	6	4	8	1	9	2
1	6	2	9	3	5	4	8	7
7	4	8	3	2	1	9	6	5
9	5	3	7	8	6	2	1	4
6	2	1	4	5	9	3	7	8

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LIKE FOOD?

We have free dinner on Sunday and Tuesday evenings at 6pm!

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Wimbledon

Solution, page 3

4	8	7	5		3	6		1
	3		8		4			
							4	
8	9					5		
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	4							
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6		1	4		9	3	7	8

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column and row contains exactly one of each of the numbers 1–6. Follow the mathematical operations for each box.

Solution, page 3

9 Attempt to obtain

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| 60 | | | | | 61 | | | | | 62 | | | | |
| 63 | | | | | 64 | | | | | 65 | | | | |
| 66 | | | | | 67 | | | | | 68 | | | | |

- 57 Nickname for Ireland
58 Old-timey "Oh, my!"
59 The Loch __ monster
60 Itty-bitty

